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ABSTRACT

A review of the status of English language instruction in Canada begins with an overview of the role of English in the society in general, and outlines the status of English use and instruction in the educational system at all levels (elementary, secondary, postsecondary, and teacher), the characteristics and training of English language instructors, the type and availability of instructional materials, educational administration and planning in relation to English teaching, English outside the educational system, British and American support, commercial opportunities related to English instruction, creative writing, language research, and other sources of information. The standards of English teaching in Canada have much in common with comparable institutions in Britain, resulting in much formal and informal exchange on the teaching of language and literature. However, erosion of the place of British literature and growth in the teaching of Canadian literature has occurred. Instruction in English as a second language is found to have developed piecemeal as a result of changing demographic and political patterns, but it continues to rely on the less theoretical British approach to second language learning. The roles of the British Council and British expertise are seen as substantial. (MSE)

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English Teaching Profile

Canada

October 1986

1 Role and status of English

Progress in implementing the policy of equal status for English and French in Canada, as recommended by the official Languages Act 1969 and the Canada Act 1982, has not always kept pace with the expectations of francophone minorities outside Quebec. By the same token, access to English schools which was severely restricted by Bill 101 passed by the Quebec Government in 1977, continues to be an irritant to some members of the anglophone minority in Quebec. Nevertheless, much of the linguistic tension has subsided as the advantages of facility in the other official language are more widely recognized.

The numbers enrolled in French immersion, particularly in western Canada, has increased largely as a result of the efforts of a pressure group 'Parents for French'. In Quebec, pressure from parents to introduce English as a Second Language (ESL) before their children reach the age of nine is increasing and more young professional francophones are choosing to learn English voluntarily.

Official recognition of native and heritage languages has also increased. The Annual Report (1985) and Minorities: A Time for Solutions published by the Office of the Commissioner for Official Languages, as well as French and English Language in Minority Settings and Teaching of English and French as Second Languages (1985) by the Council of Ministers of Education in Canada, have set out the progress and setbacks to date.

The Annual Report (1985) includes spending estimates allocated to official language programmes outside and inside the federal public service ($505,534,000 in 1985/86).

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2 English within the education system

Current trends in methodology, research and practice in Britain continue to be reflected in the curricula of English language and literature at the elementary and secondary levels.

Most provinces in Canada have introduced or updated their syllabuses. Greater emphasis has been placed on stimulating a response to poetry and literature, and on encouraging appreciation of language through the study of literature.

Interest in literacy, both in the general English curriculum and in ESL, particularly at the post-secondary level, has increased, with a corresponding interest in improving testing techniques to evaluate syllabuses, standards of literacy and second language performance.

At the tertiary level, the range of courses offered in English language and literature is extensive. Public discussion on 'standards' of literacy continues. More universities now offer credit and non-credit courses in the teaching of ESL to adults, an area for which no special training was previously required. Greater attention is also being attached to English in the workplace in most provinces.

Although there is no shortage of ESL courses, few English for Special Purposes (ESP) courses are available.

3 Teachers of English

The surplus of qualified teachers of English has not diminished. Although unemployment among recent graduates and lack of mobility has led to a lowering of morale, those in the profession are generally more anxious to upgrade their qualifications and take a more active role in professional associations. Many British specialists comment on the high degree of commitment and calibre of Canadian teachers of English.

The 4th Conference of the International Association for the Teaching of English was held at Carleton University, Ottawa in May 1986. It was held in conjunction with the annual conference of the Canadian Council of Teachers of English (CCTE). The theme 'Common concerns' included topics of general interest in Britain, such as assessment, evaluation, multiculturalism and Computer-assisted language learning (CALL). The structure of the educational system and the size of the country increases the importance of the role of provincial and national associations, most of which produce journals or newsletters, for example:

English Quarterly (CCTE)
TESL - Canada Journal
Reading in Canada - Lecture
ESL-Talk (Newcomer Services Branch, Ontario)
Alberta English
Reading - Manitoba
Indirections (Ontario Council of Teachers of English)
Speaq (Quebec TESL)
Literacy Across the Curriculum (English Department, Dawson College, Montreal)
Acute-Newsletter (Association of Canadian University Teachers of English).

The number of institutions offering initial and in-service courses in TESL has also increased significantly. A comprehensive guide entitled English and French as Second Languages in Canadian Teacher Education Institutions, by Anthony Mollica and Janice Yalden, was published in 1984. This important guide gives an up-to-date detailed description of courses, research centres, resources, professional associations, journals, etc.

Two TESL-Canada six-week Summer Institutes have already taken place, sponsored by the University of British Columbia. A third, entitled Language and Education, sponsored by Concordia University TESL department, is scheduled to take place in 1987.

Attendance of teachers on British Council courses is minimal as a result of the cost of transatlantic travel and the non-availability of official funding. There is evidence also of a rapprochement between teachers of English and teachers of ESL as a result of common concerns in meeting the needs of native and immigrant pupils.

Eleven universities offer doctoral programmes in linguistics. However, only one, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) offers a doctoral programme in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). Supervision for doctoral research projects, including ESL, is also possible in the faculties of education of at least two other universities. The flexibility of the modular PhD has resulted in a trickle of graduate students choosing to study in Britain.

The expansion of TESL courses has increased the professional status of those in the profession, and new positions generally demand some form of certification. However, the number of teachers with security of tenure and inadequate training is still considered to be too high.

The directory of the Association of Canadian University Teachers of English (ACUTE) lists members by areas of interest which cover the whole spectrum of literature and language, from Old English to present day literature, drama and poetry. The 'special interest' section provides lists of university and college teachers with a specialized interest in topics such as Arthurian or Commonwealth literature, literary criticism, rhetoric, satire, Scottish, Irish or Welsh literature, women's studies, etc. ACUTE also publishes English Studies in Canada.

4 Materials support

The marketing strategies of publishers are sophisticated, catalogues are comprehensive, and publishers' agents are readily available to give workshops at conferences and in-service training sessions. The choice of textbooks related to the new syllabuses continues to be controlled centrally to some measure at the elementary/secondary level.

Information on supplementary material, such as books and video material from Canadian sources, is more widely distributed by the relevant branch of the publishers' associations, members of the Agency for Tele-Education in Canada, in particular TV Ontario whose productions have gained international recognition and whose export record is impressive, and by journals such as Canadian Materials for Schools and Libraries which is published six times a year by the Canadian Library Association. The National Film Board of Canada's list of approximately 8,000 titles in both official languages is readily available to educational institutions. Nevertheless, the United States continues to dominate the market for supplementary video material in English language teaching, since it is considered to be more appropriate for use in Canadian schools on account of the format, presentation and cultural content.

As a result of the inadequate supply of educational software following the mass provision of computers in schools throughout the country, the Council of Ministers of Education commissioned the setting-up of a database of educational software. Although the high quality of British software has impressed many educationalists, incompatibility with microcomputers already in use has caused it to lose the edge on this potential market. It is hoped sales will improve as a result of an increase in the purchase of ACORN machines, particularly in Ontario.

At the post-secondary level, there are fewer restrictions on the purchase of textbooks and works of reference, although it is difficult to assess the volume of sales because of the practice of direct buying.

In Quebec which has the highest ESL enrolment at the elementary/secondary level (655,429 in 1985-86), textbooks for the new syllabus were selected from tenders invited from the three 'accredited publishers'. Supplementary material such as work books or activity books designed and written by local specialists are replacing imported material, further proof of the extension of the local industry as a result of the protectionist policy of the provincial government. However, Longman Publications are widely distributed in Quebec and New Brunswick by Didacta of Montreal, their exclusive agent. Video courses included in Didacta's current catalogue are Communicate by Edwin Cornelius Jr, Follow Me to San Francisco, Speak Easy by Sara K. Silverson, Your Life is in Your Hands, and Teaching with Video.

The Public Service Commission of Canada has recently introduced a new ESL programme for federal public servants, designed, written and classroom-tested by curriculum specialists and teachers at its language branch.

The Curriculum Development Unit of the Canadian Forces Language School continues to develop material for use with francophone recruits.

Plans to set up a national ESL resource centre have been temporarily postponed. The Council of Ministers of Education judged that a French language information network was more pressing. The number of excellent ESL resource guides has increased and are readily available within most provinces. The guides are also intended to assist classroom teachers who must deal with less non-native speakers of English in general classes.

There is also increased activity in the area of adult literacy and English in the workplace. The absence of a national policy and the number of agencies involved at the federal, provincial and institutional level makes it impossible to monitor developments in this field accurately.

The University of Calgary has set up an Adult ESL Co-ordinating Committee to provide a focus for all programmes offering ESL to adults.

The role of English language co-ordinators is to circulate information on resources and arrange in-service courses as required. Ministries of Culture and Immigration are also actively engaged in keeping teachers abreast of new developments.

5 Educational administration in relation to English teaching

Educational administration in relation to English teaching is complex and involves a number of agencies:

Federal Government

financial support for universities and research (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council);

special projects.

Council of Ministers of Education

an interprovincial council to facilitate co-operative action at the policy level and to consult and act together on common interests.

Provincial Ministries of Education

general policy on such matters as finance and evaluation;

adult education;

special projects;

guidelines to school boards.

Director of Curriculum

syllabus design;

liaison with teachers and curriculum advisers;

collaboration with those involved in the professional development of teachers.

School Boards

partial control of the budget;

implementation of the syllabus;

interpretation of provincial guidelines;

hiring of teachers, in-service training;

support services, e.g. libraries/media resources;

choice of textbooks within the framework of provincial policy;

collaboration with the programme co-ordinator;

adult education.

Teachers

consultative committees;

liaison with school boards on implementation of syllabus;

collaboration with the provincial ministry of education on special projects;

development of support materials.

Community Colleges

flexible collaboration with Ministry;

more financial control of resources;

more autonomy in curriculum design;

internal professional development, workshops, materials design;

adult education.

Universities

total autonomy on internal management for finances, courses, libraries;

responsibility for teaching and research; pre-service and in-service training of teachers; continuing education.

Provincial associations of teachers of English

conferences, workshops, information, resources, advisory committees;

newsletters/journals, professional standards;

liaison with pan-Canadian associations.

Canadian Council of Teachers of English

national and international perspectives on development;

all aspects of the teaching of English.

The educational administration of ESL teaching is similar to that for English teaching, except for the greater financial involvement of the federal government, e.g. formula payments for minority/second language education, grants for bilingual development programmes and language training for adult immigrants for employment purposes, usually provided by community colleges or school boards.

Concordia and Carleton universities and the language branch of the Public Service Commission, among others, offer consultancy services.

In their excellent reference work, Professors Yalden and Mollica draw attention to a bibliographic service, ERIC (Educational Resources Information Centre). The OISE is presently carrying out research and development in multimedia kits for ESL at the secondary level, and another entitled English Material in the Workplace.

6 Development and planning of the teaching of English

Changes have occurred as a result of:

an increase in the number of immigrants from Third World countries;

recognition of the linguistic rights of native peoples;

recognition of the need to provide adequate ESL training for the workplace and to assist newcomers in order to integrate them into the community (no ESL provision is made for immigrants to Quebec);

renewed commitment of the federal government to facilitate acquisition of both official languages;

increase in literacy projects.

Although there is no national plan, numerous local initiatives are encouraged and supported by each level of government and the educational authorities concerned.

7 English outside the educational system

There has been a slight increase in the number of private ESL schools in Quebec outside the main urban centres where provision is generous. The reason is the desire of young professional francophones to increase their career prospects in the present harsh economic times, coupled with the easing of linguistic tension.

An example of the expansion of client-funded projects is the establishment of the Council of Second Language Programs in Canada. Twenty-eight institutions offer a variety of ESL courses and ten offer French as a Second Language (FSL) courses. The courses are offered by universities and colleges, and are aimed at meeting the needs of foreign students. The recently formed Council claims to ensure that its members offer 'intensive immersion programmes' with a minimum of fifteen hours of tuition per week. An updated version of a comprehensive guide of institutions offering adult second language training courses, published by the Secretary of State in 1981, is expected in 1987.

8 British support for the teaching of English

The policy of the Council in Canada is to respond to and encourage requests for help with the fares of eminent British writers, critics and language specialists invited to take part in important professional conferences and literary meetings, to arrange professional programmes in Britain for Canadians involved in English language and literature, to encourage joint research projects, to promote attendance on British Council specialist courses and to offer modest book presentations.

In the two-year period which preceded the 8th Anglo-Canadian talks in London (December 1985), twenty-six Canadians in key positions in ministries of education and other institutions involved in English language teaching and/or training had professional programmes arranged for them. Most Canadian

provinces were represented. Visitors included an Assistant-Deputy Minister of Education, researchers from the OISE, curriculum designers from the Public Service Commission, a director of Adult Education, the Director of the Modern Language Centre (OISE), ESL teaching consultants from Alberta, British Columbia and the National Film Board, a representative from Immigrant Services, the Director of ESL Testing Research Centre, University of Ottawa, the ESL Co-ordinator at the Quebec Ministry of Education and the Director of the Children's Book Centre in Toronto. A staff development officer of NCILT gave an industrial training course for representatives of provincial government in Toronto.

Travel grants were given to twenty-eight British specialists invited as keynote speakers at the annual conferences of major national or provincial EL associations. They included members of London University Institute of Education, the Universities of Newcastle, Birmingham, Edinburgh and East Anglia, and language consultants from the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), etc.

Poets and authors (English, Scottish and Irish) have been helped to attend literary events as well as the Harbourfront Authors Festival (Toronto). The number also includes literary critics and translators.

Academic Travel Grants were awarded for three collaborative projects. Two book exhibitions Commonwealth Literature and Language Across the Curriculum were circulated.

9 American support for the teaching of English

American support for the teaching of English appears to be limited to book presentations and responding to requests for financial assistance for speakers invited to attend professional conferences. The proximity of the United States leads to much informal academic exchange. American commercial interests in ELL are considerable.

10 Other agency support

There is no other agency support.

11 Commercial opportunities

The reason for the restrictions on the promotion of textbooks etc., included in the 1983 profile and referred to in this report, make it clear that penetration of the Canadian market depends upon the willingness of British publishers to consider joint publication and the judicious choice of a Canadian agent. Complaints have been received that some agents are unfamiliar with the lists of the British publishers they represent.

A classic example of the success of a joint venture is Sam on Radio by Longman and Didacta, their exclusive agent in Quebec. The illustrations and ideas of the original have been retained while the content has been rewritten (to conform with norms set by the Quebec Ministry of Education) by four local

ESL specialists, E Melville, S White, M Bosquet and R Mackay (formerly of the British Council, Mexico). The courses are used throughout Quebec and new levels are being prepared. Sales are assured for at least five or six years. Shaping Up is also based on Longman material adapted for the local market by P Acheson, L Jones, S Axbey and O Johnston.

Didacta has expressed interest in a joint venture on the production of a video course for use at the elementary level, in anticipation of a change in current Ministry directive restricting the introduction of ESL to a grade 4 (age nine).

Despite the dedicated efforts of agents of BBC English Language courses and Video English, sales are minimal. The reasons most often given are conservatism in the use of video in language teaching, cultural content, and the unacceptability of the 'British accent' for mass instruction.

The supply of CALL and other software is dependent upon compatibility with hardware already in use or proposed, besides the expertise and detailed local knowledge of provincial policies by agents.

The TOEFL test still continues to be widely used for the assessment of foreign students although a trend to in-house testing is evident. There is a great deal of activity, research and interest in testing and evaluation, both with regard to standard English and ESL. Interest in the Cambridge British Council ELTS has not led to any concrete follow-up. The Atlantic ESL Centre has already gained approval to offer the RSA preparatory certificate in EFL teaching methodology - a first in Canada. A member of the English Department at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières recently agreed to evaluate testing material for the RSA examination.

The regional office in Montreal receives over 600 enquiries annually on ESL courses in Britain from young francophone students, despite the availability of 3,500 ESL Summer Language bursaries offered annually by the Office of the Commissioner for Official Languages at approved centres in Canada. It is difficult to gauge how much follow-up occurs. However, a local travel agent reports that 400 individuals and/or groups attended ESL ARELS-approved courses so far this year. Except in a minority of cases, when unrealistic expectations regarding the level of proficiency attainable at the end of a three to four week course, most students return devoted anglophiles!

Immigration restrictions on the hiring of teachers and the surplus of qualified ESL specialists makes it impossible to gain employment except in a highly specialized field. Restrictions on short-term attachments have been relaxed. More Canadian ESL specialists have found teaching positions abroad, particularly in China and Japan.

There would appear to be a potential market for material designed for adult literacy programmes and other material for adult learners.

12 Creative writing

Interest in creative writing in Canada continues to be encouraged, supported and actively promoted, and reflects a collective search for a 'Canadian identity'. Canadian writers in English, such as Mavis Gallant, Margaret Laurence, Mordecai Richler and Michael Ondaatje, are gaining greater international recognition. Writers in French such as Antonine Maillet, Marie-Claire Blais and Yves Beauchemin are making a greater impact in France. The

increase in the number of works in both languages which appear in translation has helped to break down the barriers between the 'two solitudes', and contributes to the richness of the pool of creative writing.

In the preface to the Canadian Literature Index, which is presently being compiled by the ECW Publishing Company, reference is made to the fact that over 100 literary periodicals are currently being published in Canada on a regular basis. The Company also produced a series entitled Canadian Writers and their Works and another on Writers on Video.

A significant initiative was taken in 1983, under the leadership of the Council of Ministers of Education and a consortium of the provinces and two territories, to produce a twenty-five part series on Canadian literature in collaboration with the provincial educational media, TV Ontario, ACCESS Alberta and private companies. The series features twenty-four authors from all parts of Canada including Earl Birnie, W O Mitchell, Anne Hébert, Roch Carrier, Alice Munro and Robertson Davies.

The annual International Festival of Authors and other literary events held at Harbourfront in Toronto, brings together an impressive selection of internationally renowned authors and poets. British participants have included William Golding, Malcolm Bradbury, Doris Lessing, Martin Amis (some of them British Council-sponsored). Canadian contributors have included Farley Mowat, Timothy Findley, and francophone authors, Antonine Maillet, Naim Kattan, Yves Beauchemin, as well as Michel Tremblay, whose plays have appeared in London and Edinburgh in translation.

Authors are much more 'visible'. They give workshops, attend book fairs, give readings of their work in libraries, schools and colleges.

13 Current research

The most recent bulletin of the Canadian Association of Curriculum Studies lists the following research projects by category:

a. Research in writing in the curriculum - 5 institutions

b. Research in children's language abilities - 9 institutions

c. Research in language arts teaching - 6 institutions

The 21st report of the Modern Language Centre of OISE includes the following research and development projects in progress:

a Development in bilingual efficiency

b. English in the workplace - evaluation projects

c. ESL workplace materials

d. Handbook series on Language and Literacy

e. The National Heritage Language Resource Unit

f. Reading in English for native children

g. National Survey - 'Heritage Languages in Preschools'

A significant feature of research in Canada is the wealth of publications on second language pedagogy.

The level of research in university departments of English and the English departments of faculties of education is comparable with analogue institutions in Britain.

The directory of the Association of Canadian University Teachers of English which groups members by specialized interest covers the widest possible spectrum of British, American and Canadian literature from Old English to the present day.

Other research projects in ESL are:

a. Application of theory from language-related disciplines to the consideration and solution of problems in language learning and teaching (Centre for Applied Language Studies, Carleton University);

b. Preparation of a video tape library on teacher training (Concordia University);

c. Applications of corpus-based linguistics research in artificial intelligence (Concordia University);

d. Second language performance testing (University of Ottawa).

14 Bibliography and sources of further information

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See also

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15 **General statement**

Despite the small size of the British Council's representation in Canada (Representative is the only London Appointed Officer), contact is maintained with key people in every institution and ministry involved in the teaching of English. Although the administrative structure of the educational system is unique, Canada is considered an analogue country. Therefore, the standards of English teaching have much in common with comparable institutions in Britain and, as a result, a great deal of formal and informal exchange on the teaching of language and literature has developed. However, the central place traditionally enjoyed by British literature in the curriculum has eroded and has been replaced by a corresponding increase in Canadian literature. The study of the classics is still considered a 'must' at all levels within the English sector, and in many colleges and all university departments of English in the French sector.

The provision for ESL, however, has developed piecemeal as a result of changing patterns of immigration and social and political pressures. Despite the proximity of the United States, Canadians have been influenced by the less theoretical approach to second language learning, and continue to draw inspiration from British expertise.

The role of the Council in encouraging exchanges is generously acknowledged, and its respect for Canadian endeavours and expertise is appreciated. Commercial opportunities are limited, in keeping with the endeavours by Canadians to gain greater control of their own cultural industries, including publishing. Those British publishers who have taken the trouble to study the market and have had the foresight to adapt their marketing strategies accordingly have been the most successful.